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## Moving Forward, Carefully

A year ago, CBF/GA was struggling to adjust to the shifting sands and unknown timeline of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, cautiously but with a sense of excitement, we are beginning to move forward into whatever this new reality holds for us as a network of churches and Baptist believers. In this issue of *Visions*, you will find more details about these events that are planned for the rest of 2021.

Of course, if case rates increase again, these plans could change, but the trends are promising, especially as more people are vaccinated against COVID-19.



- **Regional IN-PERSON Gathering in conjunction with the VIRTUAL CBF General Assembly:** August 26-27, Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta

- **Senior Adult Retreat:** September 26-28, First Baptist Church, Saint Simons Island



- **CBF/GA State Gathering:** November 7-8, First Baptist Church, Gainesville

- **In addition, we move forward with familiar initiatives** that may have been paused or had a different look last year because of the pandemic.

- While some **Student.Church** and **Student.Go** positions are still virtual this year, others are in person, and we look forward to sharing with you soon about Georgia students who are involved in these summer programs.



- Applications for the theological **education scholarships** are open for the 2021-2022 academic year, with an application deadline of July 31.



- **Congregational Ministry Grants** are once again available for new outreach and community projects.

- Our partnership with **Together for Hope** promises new opportunities for ministry and service, particularly in the Americus area.



WYS JANUARY 14-16, 2022

- Our new **Coordinator for Young Baptist Ministries**, Megan Doud, is laying the groundwork for renewed college outreach in the fall, among other projects.

- And a fine group of Georgia students is serving as **counselors with PASSPORT Camps** this summer, in-person!



WEDNESDAY WEBINARS



- Some of the new programs born during the pandemic, including the **monthly webinars** and **Monday preaching conversations**, will continue after a short summer break, as these have proved popular and helpful. ■

A long and difficult season seems to be coming to a close, and we at CBF/GA look forward to the next chapter in our story, indeed in God's story.

# Being a CBF Baptist Means *FREEDOM!*

I began learning about the peculiar tribe of Christians called Baptists in the late 1990s as a recent transfer student to Mercer University. Dr. Walter B. Shurden was my professor, and I had no idea of the extent of his influence and presence in the life of Baptists. All I knew was that he was a tenacious grader, a great lecturer, and a kind soul. Throughout our class entitled “Baptist Heritage,” Dr. Shurden would continually remind us that Baptists were about *FREEDOM!*

At that time in my life, several of my friends were enamored with the Mel Gibson movie *Braveheart*, about the historical figure William Wallace. In the dramatic apex of the movie, Wallace appears in front of a rag-tag band of Scottish soldiers who are about to launch into battle against King Edward I and England during the First War for Scottish Independence. Wallace’s motivational speech in the movie is the stuff of legend, and the final lines have been memorialized, “And dying in your beds, many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days, from this day to that, for one chance – just one chance – to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they’ll never take our freedom?”

In the intervening years, as my love for and appreciation of Baptists has deepened, I often think about those days learning about Baptists and freedom. From our beginnings in the early 1600s in England, led by John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, freedom has been coursing through our ecclesial and theological veins. It should come as no surprise, then, that when more fundamentalist members of the Southern Baptist Convention began exerting more control over local congregations, SBC-related seminaries, and agencies, and tightening the

reigns on who could be faithfully called a Southern Baptist or who could be truly called by God to ministry, the cry of freedom would burst forth, welling up from deep within our collective souls.

Out of this cry for freedom, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship was born. Thirty years ago this month, throngs of freedom-loving Baptists gathered in Atlanta to discern where God would lead us next. It had become apparent that the machinations of the Southern Baptist Convention would not allow for congregations and individuals to hold fast and practice these deeply-held beliefs. No longer would churches be free to follow God as their conscience dictated; strictly and completely aligning with a denomination’s vision and prescription for church practice was the only way forward. The pressure of conformity to a rigidly imposed system of belief and practice was not limited to congregational matters. Those wishing for control instead of cooperation forcefully held that a person’s own interpretation of scripture, even if led by God’s Holy Spirit and nurtured within a community of faith, must fall into line with the views of those at the top of the denominational pyramid, lest that person be accused of heresy or, even worse, be labeled moderate or liberal.

The founding of the CBF marked a new day for Baptists anchored mostly in the south and southeastern United States. Trying our very best to hold on to the historic traditional Baptist principles that placed *FREEDOM* at the center of our being, we pressed forward with a new dream of being Baptist in a rapidly-changing world. We wanted to hold the tent flaps wide open for those who find themselves at various points along the theological and, yes, even political spectrum. We

began this new journey of cooperation and commitment to the work of God in our world, “with the freedom to have both an open Bible and an open mind, a concept of the church that is both ecumenical and congregational, a view of religious freedom that thinks of others as well as self, a concept of ministry that includes laity as well as clergy, an understanding of the church’s mission that includes justice and mercy as well as evangelism and missions.” (Shurden, “A Decade of Promise”: An Address at the 10th Anniversary Banquet of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, June 27, 2001.)

In short, CBF was founded for *FREEDOM!* We wanted to be free as we read our Bibles, as we brought our whole selves, fully and completely, to God, as we lived out our calling within our respective congregations, as we cooperated with other Christians and other community members, as we humbly approached our mission to be bearers of God’s grace to our world. Our longing for freedom, though, was not simply hoping for less control so that we could have license to sin or even to ignore the words and teachings of Jesus. We were not wishing to be as petulant children, wanting every whim and wish that we imagined to become reality. No, our longing for freedom welled up from deep within our souls, a geyser bursting forth from the heart of our faith that, “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *FREEDOM!*” (2 Corinthians 3:17) ■



JODY LONG  
Executive Coordinator  
CBF/GA  
jlong@cbfga.org

# 2021 Senior Adult Retreat

## *Come Back to Saint Simons Island with Us!*

September 26-28 (Sunday evening – Tuesday noon)

First Baptist Church, Saint Simons Island

After a successful attempt at a virtual Senior Adult Retreat last year, hosted by First Baptist Church, Dalton, we return to Saint Simons Island and First Baptist Church, for an **IN PERSON** retreat!



### Retreat Speaker

Ruth DuCharme is Associate Pastor of Faith Formations for Families at Highland Hills Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia. She is currently pursuing certification as a spiritual director through the Haden Institute for Spiritual Direction.



Ruth has written children's curriculum for her church and for Smyth & Helwys and has led numerous small group studies and retreats.

Ruth grew up in Newnan, Georgia, around her family's barbecue restaurant, Sprayberry's BBQ. She studied church music at Tift College and at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

### Registration

To register online and pay the \$20 retreat fee by credit card, go to [www.cbfga.org](http://www.cbfga.org). You may also contact Melissa Kremer at the CBF/GA office at 478-742-1191 or [mkremer@cbfga.org](mailto:mkremer@cbfga.org) to register.

### Lodging

Lodging may fill up quickly! A block of rooms is reserved for CBF/GA at The Inn by the Lighthouse for \$139 per room per night. Call 912-638-1101 to make reservations.

Epworth by the Sea is currently being used to house workers dismantling the overturned ship, so lodging there is currently unavailable. Epworth may be available around September 1.

Other suggested lodging:

- Hampton Inn SSI, 912-634-2204
- Holiday Inn Express, 912-634-2175
- Home2Suites by Hilton SSI, 912-638-0333
- Queens Court Inn SSI, 912-268-4966
- Best Western Plus SSI, 912-638-7805
- Ocean Inn and Suites SSI, 912-634-2122

### Tentative Retreat Schedule

#### Sunday, September 26

6:30-8:00 p.m. – Check-in and Cake Fellowship at First Baptist Church, Saint Simons Island

#### Monday, September 27

9:00 a.m. – Check-in for late arrivers

9:30 – 11:00 a.m. – Gathering Time in Sanctuary, followed by Breakout Session I

11:15 a.m. – Lunch and brief program in Fellowship Hall

Monday afternoon – free time to relax and enjoy the beach and village of Saint Simons

6:45 p.m. – Music and Retreat Worship in the sanctuary, followed by an Ice Cream Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall

#### Tuesday, September 28

9:00 a.m. – Breakout Session II

10:15 a.m. – Closing Retreat Worship and Communion ■



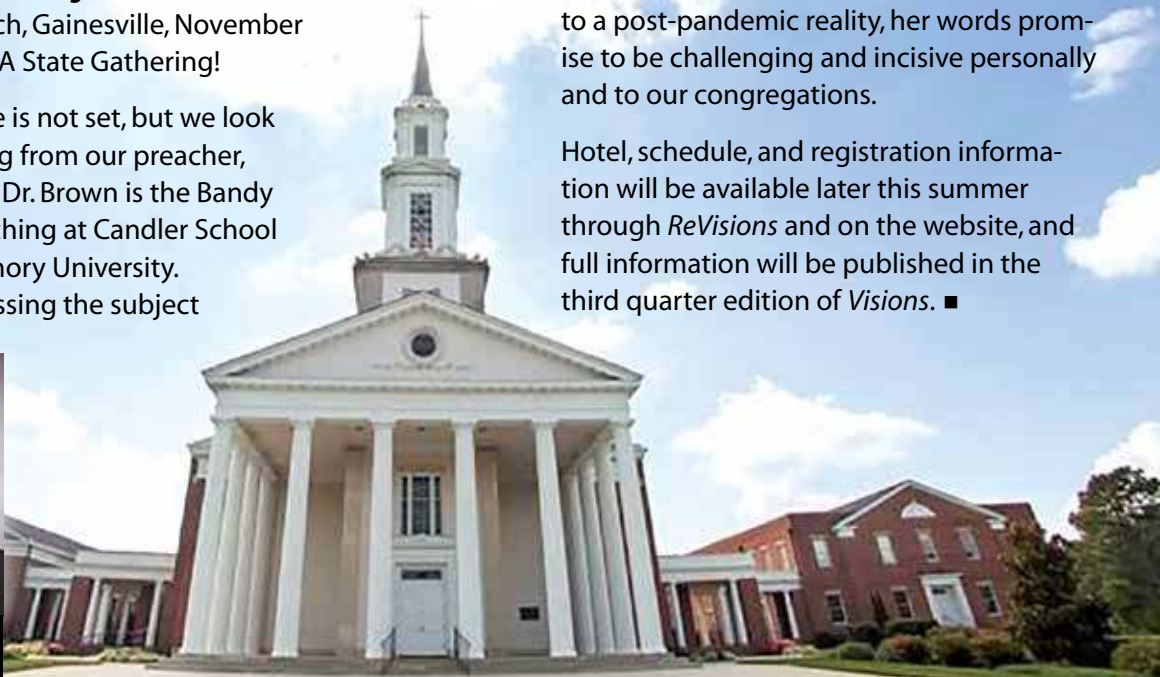
# CBF/GA Gathering in Gainesville November 7-8

All are invited to come together **IN PERSON** at First Baptist Church, Gainesville, November 7-8, for the CBF/GA State Gathering!

The final schedule is not set, but we look forward to hearing from our preacher, Teresa Fry Brown. Dr. Brown is the Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology of Emory University. She will be addressing the subject

of "God's Next...!" In this time of transition to a post-pandemic reality, her words promise to be challenging and incisive personally and to our congregations.

Hotel, schedule, and registration information will be available later this summer through *ReVisions* and on the website, and full information will be published in the third quarter edition of *Visions*. ■



## Congregational Ministry Grants Now Available

CBF/GA AGAIN IN 2021 IS OFFERING churches the opportunity to be creative and expand their ministries into the community through Congregational Ministry Grants. These matching grants of up to \$2000 will be funded through the State Mission Offering.

In 2019, the inaugural year for these grants, ten congregations from across Georgia received matching grants for a wide variety of ministry and mission initiatives. Projects have ranged from supporting foster families to the upgrading of a community garden, from referee support for a community basketball league to scholarships for students in medical coding classes.

This program has been well-received by our churches, and we are pleased to continue to offer these grants. Grant applications will be considered on a rolling basis for now, so there is no deadline for applying.

While CBF/GA does not have specific projects in mind, we hope that the projects that churches propose will further support the mission and values of CBF/GA. We have identified four specific categories into which projects should fall:

- Community Partnerships
- Interfaith Initiatives
- Local Mission Engagement
- Young Leadership Development

For more information and for and to apply for a grant, please visit [www.cbfga.org](http://www.cbfga.org).

Please email Jody Long at [jlong@cbfga.org](mailto:jlong@cbfga.org) with any questions. ■



THE FOUNDING OF THE COOPERATIVE  
BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

# CBF IS *Born!*



**O**n May 9-11, 1991, more than 6,000 participants representing 1,556 churches gathered in the Omni Coliseum in Atlanta, Georgia. (This followed by nine months the smaller Consultation of Concerned Baptist, which had met in August, 1990, at the Inforum in Atlanta, Georgia.)

Under the banner, “Behold I Do a New Thing,” the second convocation followed much the same format as the first with a combination of worship, smaller discussion groups, and plenary sessions for reports and business. The business sessions were lively but cordial. Substantive decisions were made in an environment of freedom and trust. A name was adopted: The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. A constitution was adopted with bylaws that made it a temporary

document, to be replaced in 1993. A coordinating council was elected with John Hewett from Asheville, North Carolina as the first Moderator. A missions proposal calling for a missions center and new directions in world mission was enthusiastically approved and affirmed.

Following the 1991 Convocation, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

took shape with organization and purpose. Under the leadership of John Hewett as Moderator, the Coordinating Council moved rapidly to consolidate the momentum gained in the first nine months. They accomplished a merger between the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

*(continues on next page)*

Above: Cecil Sherman, CBF's first Coordinator

Right: David Rogers, John David Hopper, and John Hewett (CBF/s first Moderator)



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Gaining legal status as a nonprofit organization, they elected Cecil Sherman as the first Coordinator of the Coordinating Council. This was a most significant step because it represented the selection of a leader who combined pastoral, denominational and executive experience. Cecil Sherman, who had been pastor of First Baptist Church in Chamblee, Georgia, First Baptist Church, Asheville, North Carolina, and most recently Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, had been vocal and active in the Moderate resistance to the Fundamentalist takeover. His understanding of and commitment to Baptist ideas, his courage, his ability to articulate who we are and where we are going as a movement, well qualified him to be the first leader of the fledgling and developing fellowship.

It would be difficult to say which was more important in the Fellowship's emerging identity – Baptist ideas or world missions? Both were essential ingredients in its reason for existence. The Coordinating Council approved a “Purpose and Strategy Statement for Global Missions.” This “statement” was to the mission vision of the Fellowship what the “Address to the Public” was to the theological and practical reasons for its existence.

In addition to adopting the Mission Statement, the Coordinating Council made a bold offer to Southern Baptist Missionaries in Eastern Europe inviting them to work under the auspices of the Fellowship and approved exploring



Left: Daniel Vestal speaking to an early CBF gathering.

Below: Photo of early CBF leadership group.



cooperative mission efforts with the European Baptist Federation. It was also concluded that a global missions offering be initiated to support such a mission effort as well as aggressive efforts to raise \$2.5 million for a 1993 mission budget. Such an offering and budget would support the missionaries that would be available beginning in 1992.

(Excerpted from “The History of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship” by Daniel Vestal, in *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC: Moderate Responses to the Fundamentalist Movement*. Mercer University Press, 1993.)

## A Student's Perspective— Greg DeLoach, Dean, McAfee School of Theology

In 1991, dust was starting to settle on the Gulf War that ended earlier that year, the Soviet Union was dissolving, and I was listening to Nirvana in my stonewashed jeans. I was also in my third and final year of seminary. I attended “The” seminary for Southern Baptists, but both the seminary and the denomination were becoming problematic. Like the dismantling of the Berlin Wall a few years prior, trustees of “The” seminary were beginning the work of redefining a theology school to mirror fundamentalist Baptist tastes.

With money we did not have, my wife Amy and I traveled from Louisville to Atlanta, stayed with some relatives, and attended a gathering of Baptists who were neither fundamentalist nor angry. Well, there was certainly righteous indignation that something important was being taken away, but there was genuine hope that something new was in creation. Prior to this trek to Atlanta, my prospects of serving as a Baptist minister with theological integrity seemed dubious at best, duplicitous at worst. Now something new was emerging, a fresh voice was calling, gathering, and ultimately sending.

I don't remember much about the details of the gathering. I was just 25 years old, overlooked by all the important people, and not included in any of the groups entrusted with making decisions. Most of the time, Amy and I sat with the assembly and murmured our “amens” of assent, peppered with occasional applause. I remember there were some earnest conversations about what to call this movement, a name to define and embody this noun in the making, this verb already in motion. Eventually the name “The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship” would come to describe certain Baptists, including me, for the work and witness.

After a few days of assembling, discussing, and politely debating, the event was over. We made our way back to seminary feeling inspired and hopeful for our future as Baptists. For the next three decades I served as a pastor who self-identifies as “CBF.” The churches I served were not always sure what this meant, but they invested in me, trusted me, and journeyed with me as we sought to serve our communities faithfully. Fellowship, after all, is not just

a word ascribed to a Baptist movement. It is a biblical word reminding us of the necessity of shared pilgrimage.

I am older now, a bit more skeptical about most things, a tad weary with continued debates that only further divide us in a world that cares less and less about what the Church has to say. And yet I remain hopeful. Whenever we can gather to seek what is good and loving, the Holy Spirit is sure to visit and breathe new life into our weary bones.

The Spirit of God is always on the move. As soon as we catch up to it in places like Louisville or Atlanta, the Spirit has gone on ahead, preparing a new way. Let us not grow weary or faint as we move forward to a world needful of love.

## Present from the Beginning— Clarissa Strickland, Retired CBF Staff

It's hard to believe it has been 30 years since I sat in the Omni Coliseum in Atlanta in May of 1991 and listened to friendly, but passionate, debate about what to name this newly-formed group of Baptists. The name finally agreed upon—Cooperative Baptist Fellowship—had actually been proposed in a meeting a year earlier in 1990 by Page Fulgham, a Georgia pastor.

That earlier meeting, the Consultation of Concerned Baptists, also in Atlanta, was called by Daniel Vestal, following his defeat in a final run for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, put forth by a group of “moderate” Baptists in an effort to turn back what was called the fundamentalist takeover. Realizing the futility of further effort to stem that tide, this group became the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, which was basically a funding arm (or “bucket” as David Sapp, another pastor, famously called it), to bypass the more egregious violators of the historic Baptist principles funded by the old SBC Cooperative Program. It would later merge into what became the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Well, as the old Virginia Slims cigarette commercial used to say, “You’ve come a long way, Baby!” And how!

Those early days were heady ones. It was almost a Pentecostal-type movement, infused with the enthusiasm and excitement of this group of what our first moderator, John Hewett, called “free and faithful Baptists.” A new-found freedom, in which all were included and in which all had a voice, was a sea change from what we had experienced in the “new” SBC.

Early on, I was hired on a very part-time, temporary basis, which turned into a 23-year career for me. (I actually have a t-shirt from the 1993 General Assembly in Birmingham, which I now put on when I color my hair.) It’s a wonder to think that we now have young CBFers who were not even born when I acquired that shirt! The only other employee (Sandra Davey) and I worked for that first year without any

on-site supervision, in a one-room office. But in April of 1992, Cecil Sherman was hired as CBF’s first Coordinator.

Cecil was just the right person for the job, uniquely gifted to act as midwife (midhusband?) in the birth of this Fellowship. I heard him say many times, “This baby will survive.” And it did!

“We are flying this airplane while we are building it.” That was a line heard often in meetings of those early Coordinating Councils. And it was a privilege for me to be there during much of this early history, and on into 2014. I was there as this young organization grew and morphed, shaped by time and events, with the size of our staff ever increasing. I was there as we relocated from a somewhat dingy office building in downtown Decatur, to a five-room suite on the Mercer Atlanta campus, to an office building out on I-285. Then it was back to Mercer, where we occupied the second floor of the newly-founded McAfee School of Theology. There was yet another move to the Administration and Conference Center, also on the Mercer campus. The most recent move was to CBF’s present location—back to Decatur.

If one’s head can spin over 23 years, mine certainly did. In addition to the above physical changes, it seemed we were always in the process of strategic planning and retooling or refining our mission endeavors. My own responsibilities as a CBF employee also changed frequently. I had the opportunity to work also with amazing lay leadership over the years.

The highlight of the CBF journey for me has been the relationships that formed and deepened among my traveling companions during these 30 years. I am so grateful to the early leadership and the fingerprints of folks who are no longer among us on this earth – Cecil Sherman, Oeita Bottorff, Jimmy Allen, Ken Chafin, Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler and so many others. And to all those who continue to lead us to this day, eternal thanks.

And now that I am no longer an employee, CBF is still the perfect Baptist home for me! I look forward to the next years as this “baby” continues to live and grow and change as we seek to be the presence of Christ in today’s world. Thanks be to God!

(Adapted from “And So It Begins...,” by Clarissa Strickland, in *CBF at 25: Stories of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship*. Nurturing Faith, Inc., 2016.) ■



Right: Amy and Greg DeLoach, circa 1988.



Far right: Clarissa Strickland still wears her famous smile!

# The Year Ahead ... and the Possibilities

MEGAN TURNER DOUD, CBF/GA Coordinator for Young Baptist Ministries, [mdoud@cbfga.org](mailto:mdoud@cbfga.org)

It is wonderful finally to be on board and a part of the CBF Georgia family. My family and I will be transitioning to Macon at the beginning of June. I am so grateful for the resources which have allowed us to stay in Aiken and work remotely until summer.

In the meantime, I have begun making connections with fellow CBF Georgia churches around the state. I had the opportunity to preach at First Baptist, Carrollton, at the end of February and greatly enjoyed preaching and worshipping with a congregation in person again. Most of my time in these months has been spent on phone calls and Zoom calls with multiple ministers to begin dissecting what they need from CBF Georgia and to discover ways that I can assist them alongside their ministry.

Throughout the past months, I have had the wonderful opportunity to begin getting to know some of the Mercer University college students. We had a fun gathering in March doing a little axe throwing downtown in Macon! I am excited to continue building relationships with them when I get settled in Macon in June and can't wait to have more of a presence on campus in the Fall.

Along with the college ministry piece, I am also networking with children's ministers, youth ministers, and college

ministers around our state. I am excited to be serving on the planning committee for the Winter Youth Summit, which will take place MLK Weekend in 2022. Be on the lookout for more information about getting your youth group signed up to come.



I am also serving on the OASIS planning committee. OASIS, scheduled for February 8-11, 2022, is a retreat that was started in 2014 by the CBF Youth Ministry Network, for Youth Ministers to get away and renew. This retreat takes place every two years at Montreat Retreat Center in Black Mountain, North Carolina. This year the Youth Ministry Network has invited children's and college ministers to participate alongside them. As a youth minister, I always made sure I participated in this retreat. The Youth Ministry Network was so valuable in my time as a youth minister, and I am excited to see this retreat expand so other ministers can have the same experience.

I look forward to the year ahead and the possibilities of travel, in-person events, and the continuation of getting to know the ministers in our state.

Peace, Megan ■

 Livy Baxley • PASSPORT Youth Bible Study Leader (FBC Athens)	 Ben Browne • PASSPORT Youth Bible Study Leader (Highland Hills Baptist Church)	 Milligan Burroughs • PASSPORTkids Camp Pastor (Johns Creek Baptist Church)	 Laure FitzSimons • PASSPORTkids Assistant Director (Smoke Rise Baptist Church)
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## Georgia Students Serving at 2021 PASSPORT Camps

 Jonathan Hall • PASSPORT Youth Rotations Coordinator (Smoke Rise Baptist Church)	 Cole Landrum • PASSPORT Youth Bible Study Leader (FBC Rome)	 Cooper McGill • PASSPORTkids Program Assistant (FBC Augusta)	 Barron Wallace • PASSPORT Youth Program Assistant (Parkway Baptist Church)
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# Now What?

RON McCLUNG, CBF/GA Moderator, [ronmcclung@windstream.com](mailto:ronmcclung@windstream.com)

**A few weeks ago**, my wife and I were able to spend a few days in rural Kentucky in an Airbnb rental with our daughters and their families. It was a central meeting place between Georgia, South Carolina, and Michigan. Over meals a common question was often discussed: "What's next?" The energy and excitement were palpable around that table as five grandchildren ages 2-8 and six adults offered their answers to the question.

The geography was different, but the discussion was similarly passionate and reminded me of the scene in the Upper Room around the table at the end of Luke's Gospel. The disciples are discussing "what's next" just before Jesus makes an unexpected appearance. They are emerging from a state of shock as their Lord has been crucified. Despite the Lord's teaching that he would die and would rise again, they still appear to be ill-prepared to handle this news. They are trying to figure out "now what" are we to do?

The question: NOW WHAT? is always an important question for believers of every generation who seek to follow Jesus. One of the leading questions that all churches are facing right now is "now what"? The Church is emerging from our own present-day crisis as we seek to recover from a worldwide pandemic -- something none of us in the Church have ever faced. "Now what" is as valid a question in 2021 as it was for these early disciples trying to make sense of their new reality of a Risen Lord. In a broader sense, "now what" is a question that every individual and every family must grapple with as we face different seasons and stages of life. It is not just a question that a soon-to-be-graduate must face, but it's one that

It is a spiritual thing when minds are opened by God's Spirit to consider possibilities that once were not even considered.



retirees face, mid-career couples deal with, and it's one that families must answer continually. Circumstances and situations in our lives rarely remain constant.

Jesus' first words to the disciples offer great hope and encouragement: *peace be with you*. This was a common greeting but it takes on a deeper meaning in light of the resurrection. This word of peace is a great word for our times, especially when circumstances surprise us or overwhelm us and we're uncertain how to respond. Our Lord's words are a heavenly reminder to remember who is in charge when your world turns upside down. Peace -- don't panic, don't overreact, don't let fear rule the day. The same God in control at Calvary is the same God that rolled the stone away. Trusting in God is the path that leads us to find peace.

Next in this encounter, Jesus offers the disciples an *invitation* to help them from unbelief to belief, to help them look through the fog of disbelief and see things more clearly. He says: look at me! Look at my hands and feet. Luke provides multiple exhibits in his narrative to illustrate the bodily resurrection of our Lord. Nevertheless, one of the most compelling bits of evidence that bears witness that Christ lives today is found in the faithful example of believers who have persevered through this pandemic and continue to find ways to be the hands and feet of Christ to others in these challenging times. How does the Church recover from a pandemic? Keep our

eyes on Jesus and serve and love others in His name.

Finally, we read in Luke's narrative that Jesus *opened their minds* so they could understand the Scriptures. It took an act of God for the mind of these believers to be opened. I would submit it still requires an act of God for minds to be opened. All the statistics, logic, common sense, and arguments we might put forth are incapable of changing people's minds. Facebook is proof of that reality. It is a spiritual thing when minds are opened by God's Spirit to consider possibilities that once were not even considered. Let us pray that Jesus will continue to do what only Jesus can do. As your church continues to discuss "now what," let this passage of Luke be our guide so we might accomplish things that were once deemed impossible. ■



## CBF/GA Theological Education Scholarships Available

The application period for the 2021-2022 academic year is now open, and the deadline to apply is July 31, 2021.

The application form may be found at [www.cbfga.org](http://www.cbfga.org).

# Together for Hope (TFH) Efforts in Georgia Begin to Take Shape!

AS OF THIS SPRING, PLANS ARE COMING TOGETHER in Sumter County, where Wendy Peacock, pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church and past moderator of CBF/GA, is helping to connect Together for Hope (TFH) with local agencies and initiatives.

TFH was begun in 2001, with the goal of reaching into the 20 poorest counties in the country. Today, TFH has expanded to focus on 301 counties of persistent rural poverty that have been identified by the USDA. (The USDA definition of “persistent poverty” is when 20% of the county has been below the poverty line for 30+ years.) According to Rachel Gunter-Shapard, Regional Vice-President of TFH for our area, rural poverty affects mostly children and senior adults, the most vulnerable segments of the population. A significant number of the 301 poorest counties are in Georgia, and CBF/GA has begun partnering with TFH for work in some of these counties, especially in Sumter County around Americus. TFH uses the ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) model, which seeks to identify and utilize the strengths already present in a community. The priorities of TFH are: Education, Health and Nutrition, Housing and Environment, and Social Enterprise. TFH is currently working to expand their coalition of helping agencies,

including working out partnerships with A Better Way Grocers and the Fuller Center for Housing. In Sumter County, partners include One Sumter and Healthy Sumter. Healthy Sumter is creating a network of community gardens and hopes to establish gardens in all municipalities around Americus.

Churches are invited to consider plugging into the work of CBF/GA through Together for Hope. Right now, there are opportunities for half-day work groups to work in the gardens in Americus and surrounding areas. Soon, there will be opportunities to help work on a house in Plains. Looking beyond Georgia, CBF/GA partners with the work of CBF field personnel Anna and LaCount Anderson in Eastern North Carolina, also through TFH. The Andersons offer a variety of ways that churches and individuals can help with ministries in rural Halifax, Hertford, and Edgecombe Counties.

We will continue to provide updates as this important ministry continues to develop. Contact Jody Long at [jlong@cbfga.org](mailto:jlong@cbfga.org) for more information on connecting with opportunities for ministry in Sumter County. ■



Together for Hope



Community garden in Americus



Virtual Walk Run Ride Swim Go!  
(or paddle, row, hike)

A fun way to support Together for Hope  
this summer!

Set your own goals, choose your place and days –  
get there any way you can!

To learn more or to register, go to  
<http://cbfky.org/tfh-virtual-walk-run-swim-ride>



## CBF General Assembly Remains VIRTUAL and Moves to August; Regional IN-PERSON Gathering Planned

THE CBF GLOBAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY originally planned for Washington, D.C., in July has been rescheduled for Thursday–Friday, August 26–27 and will be held virtually again this year.

Along with CBFs of Florida and Alabama, **CBF/GA IS PLANNING AN IN-PERSON REGIONAL GATHERING ALONGSIDE THE VIRTUAL CBF ASSEMBLY.** We will gather at Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church in Atlanta. Tentative plans include a fellowship meal (or meals) and state meetings as well as viewing the worship sessions and participating in breakouts together. Detailed plans and registration information are in process and will be shared as soon as they are available, through *ReVisions*, social media, and the CBF/GA website. ■



# OASIS

A SPIRITUAL RETREAT FOR THOSE WHO MINISTER TO  
CHILDREN, YOUTH, & COLLEGE STUDENTS

## SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY 8-11, 2022

MONTREAT CONFERENCE AND RETREAT CENTER, NORTH CAROLINA

*mark your calendars!*

**WYS** JANUARY 14-16, 2022  
HUNTSVILLE, AL & RICHMOND, VA

**DWELL**  
*in ME. in US. in the WORLD.*

 **cbf** Student Ministry

## CBF/GA ON THE ROAD, IN PERSON & ONLINE

February - April 2021



CBF ChurchWorks (virtual)  
Collegiate Axe-Throwing Event, Macon  
First Baptist Church, Athens  
First Baptist Church, Augusta  
First Baptist Church, Carrollton  
First Baptist Church, Fitzgerald

Garden Lakes Baptist Church, Rome  
Highland Hills Baptist Church, Macon  
McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta  
Milledge Avenue Baptist Church, Athens  
The Oaks Baptist Church, Lyons

**If you would like for Jody Long or any of our staff to speak, preach, teach, consult, lead, or minister with your congregation, please contact CBF/GA.**

## Financial Report

### FIRST QUARTER 2021 (1/1/2021 - 3/31/2021)

Operating Budget Gifts Received: \$180,816.10  
Operating Budget Expenses: \$86,418.71  
Gain/(Loss): \$94,398.39

### FRANK & SUSAN BROOME ENDOWMENT

Balance as of March 31, 2021: \$1,337,862.80  
Endowment Gifts, 1/1/2021 - 3/31/2021: \$500.00



### COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF GEORGIA

P.O. Box 4343, Macon, GA 31208-4343  
phone 478-742-1191  
[www.cbfga.org](http://www.cbfga.org)

#### CBF/GA Staff

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#### CBF/GA Coordinating Council

MODERATOR • Ron McClung, Haddock  
PAST MODERATOR • Wendy Peacock, Americus  
MODERATOR-ELECT • Norma Rushing, Decatur  
CLERK • Glenda Kessler, St. Simons Island  
FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR • Jennifer Jindrich, Carrollton

TREASURER • Neil Heath, Macon

Lamar Barden, Rome  
Jenny Burns, Gainesville  
Joe Davis, Dalton

Katie Faison, Newnan  
Cindy Folendore, Milledgeville  
Paula "Pete" Frost, Lyons

John Paul Harris, Summerville  
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Todd Smith, Macon

Becca Springfield, Newnan  
Sarah Timmerman, Cairo  
Betty West, Hawkinsville

*Student Representative*

Anna Walker, McAfee School of Theology

#### Endowment Management Board Chair

Lamar Barden, Rome

**VISIONS** is published four times a year by CBF/GA.

All questions and comments may be directed to  
Melissa Kremer at the CBF/GA office  
at 478-742-1191 or [mkremer@cbfga.org](mailto:mkremer@cbfga.org).

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Keep up to date with all CBF/GA events at [www.cbfga.org](http://www.cbfga.org)

## On the Calendar

### SUMMER, 2021

Virtual Walk Run Ride Swim Go!  
Together for Hope  
<http://cbfky.org/>  
*tfh-virtual-walk-run-swim-ride*

### JULY 31, 2021

CBF/GA Scholarship  
applications due  
[www.cbfga.org](http://www.cbfga.org)

### AUGUST 26-27, 2021

CBF Global General Assembly  
VIRTUAL

### AUGUST 26-27, 2021

CBF/GA Regional  
IN-PERSON Gathering  
in conjunction with  
CBF Global General Assembly  
Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist, Atlanta

### SEPTEMBER 26-28, 2021

Senior Adult Retreat  
First Baptist Church  
Saint Simons Island

### NOVEMBER 4-6, 2021

CBF Regional Women's Retreat  
Gulf Shores, AL

### NOVEMBER 7-8, 2021

CBF/GA State Gathering  
First Baptist Church  
Gainesville

### JANUARY 14-16, 2022

Winter Youth Summit (WYS)  
Huntsville, AL &  
Richmond, VA

### FEBRUARY 8-11, 2022

OASIS Retreat for Ministers  
of Children, Youth,  
& College Students  
Montreat, NC



### CBF/GA New Website

Drumroll please! Our new website is live! CBF/GA is excited to announce the launch of our newly redesigned website, which has been many months in the planning.

The new site offers a fresh look and easier navigation. You will find the same information and essentially the same look whether you are using your desktop, tablet or smart phone! Our main goal in designing this site is to offer an easier way for churches and individuals to receive current information and to stay connected and focused on our mission to work in fellowship with one another.

We hope you will enjoy browsing our new site, and we welcome your feedback as we continue to work on improvements! We can't wait to hear what you think! ■

“Our mission: Being the presence of Christ in the world.”